

**Listing of claims:**

1. (Previously presented)      A computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable components, comprising:
  - a first component that is arranged to edit an electronic document having editable objects;
  - a second component that is arranged to define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired and to define a second location for the end of the editable object region, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier;
  - a third component that is arranged to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier;
  - a fourth component that is arranged to encode in an ML format in the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier; and
  - a fifth component that is arranged to output an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.
2. (Previously presented)      The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.
3. (Previously presented)      The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 2, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.
4. (Previously presented)      The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.
5. (Previously presented)      The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 4, wherein the editable objects are cells.

6. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 1, wherein the first and second elements are imbedded in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.

7-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously presented) A method for handling electronic documents, comprising:  
editing an electronic document having editable objects;

defining a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier;

defining a second location for the end of the editable object region;

associating a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier; and

encoding in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the editable objects are cells.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 10, further including imbedding the first and second elements in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising outputting an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.

17-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) A computer system for displaying and modifying electronic documents, comprising:

an electronic document file that comprises editable objects;

an editor that is arranged to define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier, to define a second location for the end of the editable object region, and to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier; and

an encoder that is configured to encode in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein the electronic document is stored in a proprietary format.

21. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

22. (Original) The system of Claim 21, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

23. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

24. (Original) The system of Claim 23, wherein the editable objects are cells.

25. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the first and second elements are imbedded in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.

26. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the encoder is further configured to output an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.

27-28. (Cancelled)